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COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJECT: ALLEGED MASSACRE OF CIVILIANS IN SONSONATE DEPARTMENT  
BY ELEMENTS OF ARMED FORCES MILITARY DETACHMENT SIX.

*Last Hojas*

DOI :

SOURCE :

[REDACTED]

Approved for Release

NOV 1993

[REDACTED]

1. AT APPROXIMATELY 0520 HOURS ON 22 FEBRUARY 1983, THREE MILITARY TRUCKS CARRYING ABOUT 150 SOLDIERS FROM MILITARY DETACHMENT SIX IN SONSONATE ENTERED THE VILLAGE OF LAS HOJAS. A FOURTH TRUCK, CONTAINING ABOUT 50 SOLDIERS, WAS STATIONED OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE. THE SOLDIERS IN LAS HOJAS, COMMANDED BY A CAPTAIN ((FIGUEROA)) MORALES, STOPPED AND QUESTIONED A NUMBER OF VILLAGERS WHO HAD JUST LEFT AN EARLY MORNING CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS SERVICE. THE SOLDIERS STATED THAT THEY HAD INFORMATION THAT THERE WERE SUBVERSIVES IN THE AREA WHOSE COMMANDER WAS A FATHER ROBERTO LEONARDO ((ZACAPA)), A CATHOLIC PRIEST. THE VILLAGERS REPLIED THAT THEY HAD NEVER HEARD OF ZACAPA.

(COMMENT: ONE OF THE VILLAGERS QUESTIONED BY THE SOLDIERS WAS A CATHOLIC LAYWORKER NAMED ROBERTO LEONARDO ((PARRANGA)), WHO IS NOT A LEFTIST. DUE TO THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN HIS NAME AND ZACAPA'S, HOWEVER, HE IS FEARFUL OF POSSIBLE ACTION AGAINST HIM BY THE ARMED FORCES).

2. THE DETACHMENT SIX SOLDIERS IN LAS HOJAS WERE ACCOMPANIED BY A CIVILIAN WHO WORE A MASK OVER THE LOWER PART OF HIS FACE. DESPITE THE MASK, A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS

RECOGNIZED HIM AS NAPOLEON ((GARCIA)) ARIAS, AGE 29. GARCIA CARRIED A LIST AND INDICATED TO THE SOLDIERS THE LOCATIONS OF VARIOUS RESIDENTS IN THE AREA. THE VILLAGERS WHO HAD ATTENDED THE RELIGIOUS SERVICE AND HAD BEEN QUESTIONED SUBSEQUENTLY BY THE SOLDIERS WERE THEN ORDERED TO LEAVE THE AREA. AS THEY WERE LEAVING, THE VILLAGERS SAW THE SOLDIERS ROUNDING UP AND ABUSING A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LOCAL AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE. THE COOPERATIVE MEMBERS HAD THEIR HANDS TIED BEHIND THEIR BACKS.

3. BY 2000 HOURS, ON 22 FEBRUARY, A GROUP OF COOPERATIVE MEMBERS LED BY ADRIAN ((ESQUINO)) LIZCO, A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL INDIAN ASSOCIATION (ANIS), DISCOVERED BETWEEN 19 AND 23 CORPSES IN THE VICINITY OF LAS HOJAS. AMONG THE DEAD WERE THE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAD BEEN ROUNDED UP THAT MORNING BY THE SALVADORAN MILITARY. ALL OF THE VICTIMS HAD BEEN SHOT THROUGH THE HEAD AND ALL HAD THEIR HANDS TIED BEHIND THEIR BACKS. SEVEN OF THE VICTIMS WERE BURIED IN SEPARATE CEREMONIES AT 1100 HOURS ON 23 FEBRUARY. THE REMAINDER WERE BURIED IN A COMMON GRAVE NEAR LAS HOJAS LATER IN THE DAY AT A CEREMONY OFFICIATED OVER BY A LOCAL PRIEST, FATHER (FNU) ((WALTERS)), SINCE THE FAMILIES WERE TOO FRIGHTENED TO IDENTIFY OR CLAIM THE BODIES.

4. ON 27 FEBRUARY, TWO SOLDIERS OF DETACHMENT SIX INFORMED

[REDACTED]

